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NURSERY LAYS *of* NURSERY DAYS



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M. NIGHTINGALE
BLACKWELL · OXFORD



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NURSERY LAYS of NURSERY DAYS

M. NIGHTINGALE

SCRIPT & WOODCUTS BY
C.T. NIGHTINGALE
1919

B.H. BLACKWELL OXFORD

For you who can never be lost or dead,
Baby o'mine, Baby o'mine,
I sing of the old red window-seat.
I sing of the friends of the friendly street.
I sing of the tramp of their passing feet
And the things that the sound of them said.

For, surely, wherever you are today,
Baby o'mine, Baby o'mine.
Though you sail your ship on the crystal sea,
Though you ride on the wind's back, wild & free,
Though you find the fairies, you'll sometimes be
A little bit tired of play.

You'll tire, though you romp in the farthest sky,
Baby o'mine, Baby o'mine;
Who should know you and I not know,

You who are mine from the long ago,
Mine till the rivers shall cease to flow
And the ocean of time run dry?

You'll tire and you'll call me creation through,
Baby o-mine, Baby o'mine,
From the hills where the lights of Someday gleam,
Over the spaces that only seem,
And down in the depths of the deepmost dream
You'll ask me to sing to you.

And I'll sing, whilst I hold you upon my knee,
Baby o'mine, Baby o'mine,
Things you'd have heard in the Might Have Been,
Things you'd have thought and loved and seen,
I've written them out all fair and clean,
I'll sing them for you and me.

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THE MILKMAN.



t's jolly when you're restless (as one generally feels
Lying very still in bed and making plans)
Just to hear his harness jingle and the
rattle of his wheels
And the clang-a-clang of all his shiney cans.
For when you know that lying still is such a great mistake,
It's nice to know the milkman knows you're really
wide awake.

I hear him say "Whoa back there!" & then he calls "Mee-yook,"
And when he bangs his can-lid extra loud
I scramble very quietly on the window-sill and look,
And if he waves his whip I'm very proud.
For though the milkman brings the milk for
breakfast and for tea,
He told me once he really comes to say Good-day to me.



THE SHEPHERD.

p in the hills where the hill-winds blow
Lives the Shepherd-man all alone.
And the white sheep graze on the old green grass
Round his cottage of old grey stone.

The sheep-dog gathers the white sheep home
As soon as the long day's done;
The Shepherd-man stands at the sheep-fold door
And he counts them one by one.

There's never a sheep but knows his voice,
He calls each sheep by name ;
And some are naughty and some are good,
But he loves them all the same.

And the day will come when he brings his sheep
From the hills where the hill-winds blow
To the king of the city whose sheep they are,
— The Shepherd-man told me so.

Over the fields the long road winds
From the hills where the white sheep graze,
And there I've watched for the Shepherd-man
For days and days and days.

At night sometimes when I'm quiet in bed
Comes a bark in the lonely street,
And I hold my breath whilst I try to hear
The patter of tiny feet.

But they'll come at last, 'cos he said they would;
Perhaps when the brown leaves fall
I shall see again the white, white sheep
And the Shepherd who loves them all.

THE SCISSOR-MAN.



ing a song of Scissor-men,
"Mend a broken plate,
Bring your knives and garden shears,
I'll do them while you wait.

Buzz-a-wuzz! Buzz-a-wuzz!
Fast the wheel or slow,
Ticker Tacker! Ticker Tack!
Rivets in a row."

Sing a song of Scissor-men,
Sitting in the sun,
Sing it when the day begins,
Sing it when it's done.
Be it hard or be it soft,
Here's a jolly plan;
Sing to make the work go well,
Like the Scissor-man.



THE GRIZZLY-BEAR.



ne day when I was very small
I met the Grizzly Bear.
I sat upon the garden wall
And he stood just down there.

A ring was fastened through his nose,
The bear-man pulled him where he chose ;
It's funny.... Do you think he knows
It hurts the Grizzly Bear?

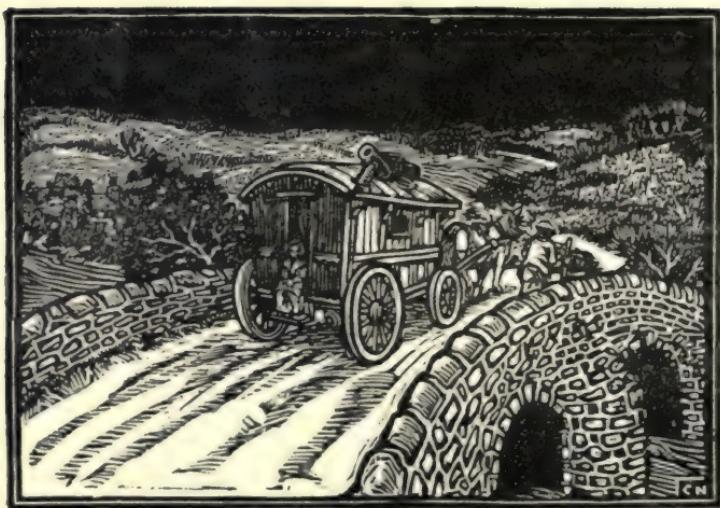
When Bruin Bear was very small —
A little soft brown cub —
His mother pi'aps would hear him call
If he were hurt and rub
His nose and kiss the achie spot
And tell him tales till he forgot.
He must be sad that now he's not
A little soft brown cub.

When he was big he had a den
That was his very own,
Away from carts and shops and men.
Where he was king alone.
But now he walks about the streets,
He hates the people that he meets,
And when he growls the bear-man beats
The Grizzly-Bear.

When I was small I laughed to see
The bear-man and his bear,
Because I hadn't thought that he
Might notice and might care.
But how I'd hate if I'd been king
Of cubs and caves and everything,
To be led round upon a string
And dance at every fair.

And now I'm big I understand.
He doesn't whine nor cry,
But he's a king in his own land,
And so when he goes by
I never stand and watch him led,
I just salute and turn my head,
And though of course I've never said,
He knows the reason why.





THE CARAVAN.



If I could be a gipsy-boy & have a caravan
I'd travel all the world, I would, before
I was a man;

We'd drive beyond the far blue hills—
us two, my horse and me —

And on and on and on and on until we reached
the sea.

And there I'd wash his legs quite clean and
bid him come inside,

Whilst I would stand upon the roof and
scan the flowing tide,

And he and I would sail away and scour the
Spanish main,

And when we'd swept the Spaniards out we'd
pr'aps sail home again.

Or if my horse was very tired of ships and
being good,

And wanted most to stretch his legs (as
many horses would)

We'd call a whale to tow us to a desert island
beach,

And there we'd search for coconuts and have
a whole one each.

If I could be a gipsy boy I wouldn't bring
a load

Of pots and pans and chairs and things
and sell them in the road.

Oh, if I was a gipsy boy and had a
caravan

I'd see the whole wide world, I would.
before I was a man.





THE FIDDLER-MAN.



I'm sure he's old and tired though
no one told me so,
For he walked so very slowly and
his beard was white as snow,
His poor arm shook and trembled as he
worked his fiddle bow,
And I think that when his fiddle played
it only cried you know.
So I said: "Are you sorrowful, fiddler man?
Here's a penny to comfort you, if it can."

But I didn't speak quite loudly 'cos I think
I was afraid.
(He didn't hold his hat as though he wanted
to be paid)

But he leaned his bended back against the
railing as he played,

And his fiddle went on crying with the
music that he made.

So I said: "Are you lonely, fiddler man?"

I do want to comfort you, if I can."

But I think he never heard me as he stood
there in the rain,

Nor saw the kiss I threw him nor heard
me tap the pane;

He looked so sad and lonely as he hobbled
down the lane,

And then he turned the corner and I won't
see him again.

For now that he's gone, though I ran and ran,

I never could catch the fiddler-man.

THE YELLOW CAT.



In summer on the sunny wall the
yellow cat and I
Sit quietly side by side and watch
the clouds go sailing by:
I love his yellow velvet paws — I love to hear
him sing.
But when it's dark and I'm in bed it's quite
a different thing.

For when it's dark from every house the cats
of every size
Come creeping forth with angry tails and
golden, gleaming eyes;
They snarl and shriek and spit and swear
— the yellow cat and they —
I love the yellow cat, but still — I love him
best by day.



POTFURNS.



hey only come in the summer-time,
And they're dressed in the funniest way,
With great red comforters round their necks,
Tied tight on the hottest day.
And whenever they shout, unless you knew,
You'd never hear what they say.

It's P.O.T.F.U.R.N.

(And there should be an "S" as well)
For I asked them once how they spell the name
Of the things that they come to sell ;
And they spelt it so (which wasn't, of course ,
The very best way to spell.)

But I understood what they meant and pr'aps
They don't go to school like me ,
Though Tom and Sam and the donkey cart
Are very polite, all three ,
And I'm sure if I lived with them every day
We never should disagree .



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THE WIND.



hen the wind is cross on a winter's day
And he blusters all down the street,
The leaves go scampering out of his way
Like pittery, pattery feet.
Pittery, pattery, rustle, they go!
And the old wind follows "Ho Ho! Ho Ho!"

He comes and thumps on the nursery pane,
And he shouts "You must let me in!"
He's much more fierce than the wettest rain,
And the glass is most terribly thin!
"Shivery, shivery, shake!" laughs he
Bang, bang! Bang, bang! Bang, bang! That's me!"

But whenever he comes when I'm tucked in bed
And the dark is as dark can be,
He cries in the chimney and in my head
Like the cries of the ships at sea ;
And it isn't the window that shivery shakes,
But me at the horrible tales he makes.

For all the bedroom is angry waves,
And the big ships sink and die,
And under the bed is the coral caves
Where the poor dead sailors lie.
Oh ! whenever the wind talks to you at night,
Just cover your head with the clothes quite tight.

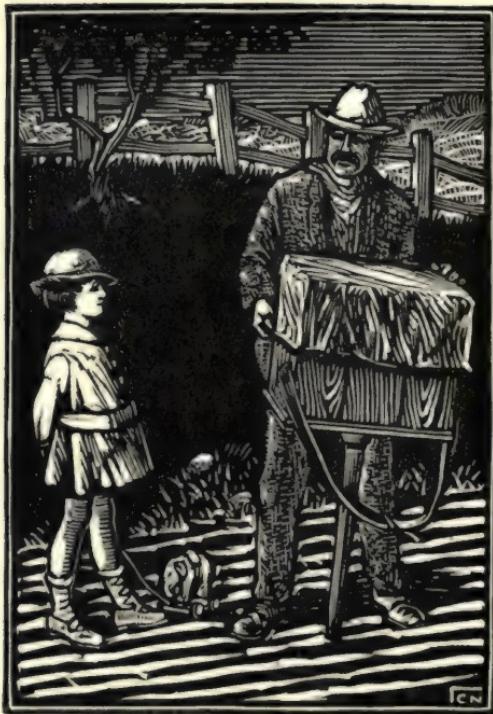


THE OWL.



he very wisest friend I've got,
He doesn't wear a gown
Of black nor yet a mortar board,
He's clad in rusty brown
With speckles on his chest, and eyes
Whose lids slip up and down.

His house is in a tree that stands
Beyond my window-sill.
And all his wisest tales are told
When all the world is still;
They're silver tales of silver things
Beyond the farmost hill.



THE ORGAN-GRINDER.



ver the hills and far away,
Over the foamy sea,
Is the loveliest country in all the world
And its name is Italy.

There are wonderful vineyards fresh and fair,
Where the purple wine-grapes grow;
There's a city with rivers instead of streets
And black boats, smooth and slow.

There are hot grey walls where the lizards lie
And sleep in the summer sun;
And the boys put flowers in their bright, black hair,
And are beautiful, every one.

There are beautiful cakes too, made of cream,
And macaroni cheese;
And you bathe in a sea that is always warm,
As often as ever you please.

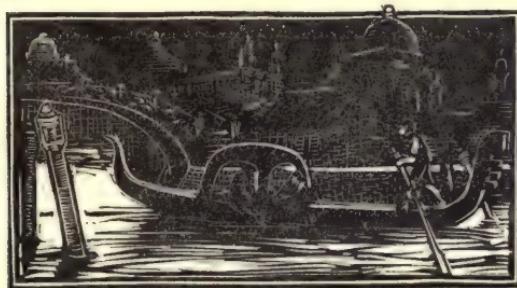
There are festa days when the whole world laughs,
And you dance and play and sing;
And God who sits in the blue, blue sky,
He smiles on everything.

But it's over the hills and far away,
Is the organ-grinder's land,
And though I've never been there myself,
I think I can understand.

For when he has played his organ through
And there's no more left to play,
He will sometimes sit for awhile and talk
On the bank by the side of the way.

And he tells me all that he left behind
In his sunshine land of flowers,
And though I'm English it seems to me
It's a lovlier land than ours.

And whilst I listen I seem to see
The tears in his big, brown eyes.
When I'm big I shall buy him his ticket home
→ Right home — for a great surprise.





THE MUFFIN-MAN.



hen the nursery corners are creepy dim,
And it isn't quite time for tea,
And the shadows & things are very grim,
And there's nobody there but me,
I wait in the window to hear his feet
Come clackety, clackety down the street,
And I love the sound of his ding-dong bell
And his "Muffins, O, Muffins, O, Muffins to sell."

He always comes in the wind or wet
Or the fog or the bitterest cold,
He's my greatest friend, though we haven't met
And he's ever so big and old.
For the dark is a little bit lonely sad
When you've noone else and you wish you had,
And I think he knows, for he rings his bell
And shouts to me "Muffins, O, Muffins to sell."



THE LAMPLIGHTER.



he robin is washing his tiny bill
And brushing the dust from his wing,
But the big sun sits on the farmost hill
And he sulks like anything.

The lampman comes with his solemn tread,
Solemnly down the street,
And the robin he scurries away to bed
The moment he hears his feet.

The lampman's stick is a magic wand,
It makes the clouds unfold,
And it lights the stars in the sky beyond
And the lamps in the street all gold.

And through the trunks of the poplar trees,
Looking over the edge of the day;
It's the lamps & the stars that the big sun sees
And he knows he must go away.

He's terribly cross, as his red face shows,
Sitting there on the farmost hill.
If he gets much redder before he goes
I'm sure he'll be really ill.



SANTA CLAUS.

hen Santa Claus comes down the street
Upon his reindeer sleigh,
I hear his reindeer's padding feet
Upon the snowy way.

"Pud, Pud, Puddety, Pud!" Hear, Oh hear them say!
"Here's all our stock for a small boy's sock,
What'll you have to day?"

When Santa Claus goes down the street
Upon his reindeer sleigh,
I hear the sleigh-bells soft and sweet,
I hear them die away.
"Tink...le! Tink...le! Hear, Oh hear them say!
"Here's silver bells and glad Nowells for
tomorrow's Christmas Day!"



THE WAITS.



here were sparkles on the window-pane
and sparkles in the sky,
The moon it sparkled like a star
above the world so high,
There was star-shine on the ceiling, there was
star-shine on the bed,
There was star-shine in my eyes, I think, and
star-shine in my head.

I clambered from my sleep, I did ; I flung the
window wide,
I wanted all that waited in the Christmas
Eve outside,
I wanted for myself to hear the Christmas
people sing, -
I wanted for myself to hear the Christmas
joy-bells ring.

And there outside were waiting three grey
Shepherds in the snow,
(I knew that they were Shepherds, for they
all had crooks, you know),
And when they saw me waiting too they
sang to me a song –
The stars, they caught and whispered it
the whole wide sky along.

And then the Shepherds went their way and
three black camels came,
They stayed beneath the window there and
waited just the same;
And each black camel on his back had
brought an Eastern King,
And though each King was very great each
had a song to sing.

They sang it as the Shepherds sang, a
little low sweet song.—

The white stars caught and whispered it
the whole wide sky along;

And then the camels went their way, I
watched them down the street,
The snow lay white and soft and still
beneath their silent feet.

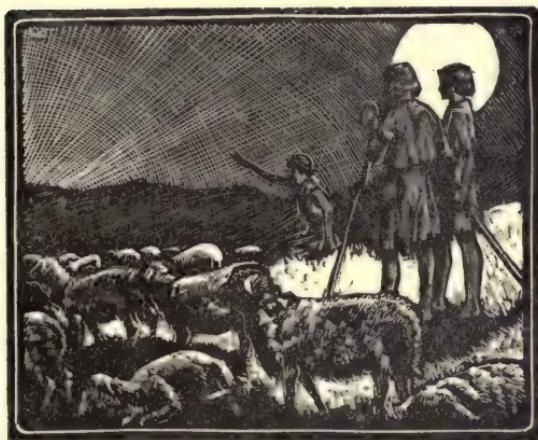
There was singing in the tree-tops, there was
singing in the sky,

The moon was singing to the clouds above
the world so high,

And all the stars were singing too and
when I looked below,
I saw a little, tiny Child was waiting in
the snow.

And first I watched him wait there —
watched & only waved my hand,
For though the song was in my heart I did
not understand,
Until at last it burst in words, because at
last I knew,
And then he looked at me and laughed and
sang the star-song too.

And right across the misty fields I heard
the church bells ring,
The star-song echoed far and wide for all the
world to sing,
But still the tiny Child stood there — the
Child that once was born —
We sang His birthday song — we did — upon
His Christmas morn.



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